THE HUMBLE ANSWER OF THE General Councel Officers of the Army,

Under his Excelency,

THO. Lord FAIRFAX:

TO THE

DEMANDS

OF THE

Honorable the Commons of *England* assembled in Parliament:

Concerning the late ſecuring or ſecluding of ſome MEMBERS *thereof.*

Signed in the name, and by the appointment of the Generall Councell of the Officers of the Army:

JOHN RUSHWORTH Secr'.

London, Printed for *H. Beck*, 1648.

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To the Honourable the Commons of ENGLAND, assembled in PARLIAMENT:

The humble Answer of the General Councel of Officers for the Army under his Excellency Thomas *Lord* Fairfax, *to the demand of the House concerning the late securing and secluding some Members thereof.*

BEing required by this honorable House to give an account concerning the securing of some late Members thereof, and secluding of others from coming to sit there; We humbly answer as followeth.

First, for the grounds and ends of our desiring to have some of them secured, and others of them (coming within the compass of those corrupt and destructive Councels pointed at in our late Proposals to this House of the sixth of December last) to be no further trusted in your Councels, but excluded, or at least suspended from the House, we refer to the Paper of our Proposals of the sixth of December, and for the justice and reasonablenes of those grounds (if not clear enough as they are there laid down) we further refer to our late Declaration, and the Remonstrance preceding.

1. For our actuall doing of that in part, and as far as in us lay, which in those Proposals we desired, we acknowledg it to be a course in it self irregular, and not justifiable, but both by honest intentions for publick good, and an extraordinary necessity for the same end leading us thereunto; For the first of which (our intentions) though we have expresst enough in our said Proposals, Declaration and Remonstrance, yet we expect not that words can give satisfaction therein, or that the same can be otherwise fully cleared, then by our actuall endevors, and the issue which God shal give. For the later (the necessity) if it be not sufficiently set forth in our former Papers we have this further to say:

First, we desire you to look back and consider, how the majority of this House came to be formed to serve the kings, and other corrupt and factious interests, we shall hint at some few occasions thereof, and steps thereunto. It is too evident by the obstructions and diversions of your Councels al along the War, from the vigorous prosecution thereof to a speedy issue, that even in those times, when most of the old Malignant members did desert you, the king had yet a considerable party that stayed behind at the House, (especially of such who though really affected to his Cause, yet durst not leave you, to adhere openly to him, in regard their estates lay much within your power) and he was never wanting in any Acts to improve and increase that party; yet while the War was in some suspensive posture, his hopes of prevailing by force made him less careful to work that other way, and the fear of al those Members who looked at him as the Common enemy, to those severall wayes and interests they affected, kept them more close and united against him: but so soon as it pleased God to turn the scales clear, so as the first War became at or neer an end by a full Victory on your parts against him, then both he and his party seeing their hopes by force to fail, began to ply more close the ways of fraud and underhand practise, to make, encrease, and work upon divisions amongst your selves, and by all means to form a party in the house unto a conjunction, or at least complyance with his interest; and then also those severall parties in the House, of different principles and interests from the publick, being more free of their fears from him (their Common enemy) began to look with more jealousie each at their particular opposites, insomuch as divers of those whose principles were more complyant to a closure with the King upon satisfaction in the particular matters, especially concerning the

form of Religion and Church government, which they mainly affected, began to incline the more unto a PEACE with him on such termes, to the end they might avoid any advantage, which the opposers of their way they feared might make, by being forwarder to comply with him then themselves, and those who were acted more by personall and self-interests then any other principle, relating either to Religion or the Publike, were ready to entertain or seek complyance with his party and interest, whereby to strengthen their own, that their ambitions in personall advantages, and their envy or animosities (in crushing those whom they maligned) might be the easier and surer served, and therefore such as these strucke in with the malignants on the one hand (who were ready to close with any against those they found most opposite to the *KING*) and with *PRESBYTERIANS* on the other hand, with whom by former forwardness against the Common enemy, they had more repute then the noted Royalists had.

And thus this self-serving party acting as Mediators betwixt the through-Royalists, and the real Presbyterians, and taking opportunities to serve each of them, against those whom the Royalists with themselves did hate, and whose prevalence the Presbyterians feared; They daily gained esteem and trust from both, and their Councels being by both much relyed on as fittest, leading men by the ordinary conjunction of those two parties, with their own, they soon gained a prevailing vote, especially in things tending to the prejudice or opposal of those against whom all three parties for their several respects aforesaid were united.

And thus for the most part they long since easily carried all things to the encrease of their own advantages, and diminution of those maligned by them, who stood firmest for the publique Interest, and by subtil degrees drew all things on fair, towards a complyance with the *KINGS* Interest, which best served and suited with their own, save that the honest and conscientious Presbyterians (discerning oft their bent that way, and their palpable animosity and virulence against the reputed Independents, to the frequent prejudice & endangering of the Common cause) did in such cases ordinarily dissert them, oft oppose their violence, and gave checks to their carreer; and therefore that ambitious and self-seeking party to make their Faction strong by such as would the surer serve their turns, especially in their affected closure with the King, and crushing of those that stood most in the way to his and their own ful Dominion, it was the great endevor of them, and the Royal party upon vacancy of Burgesses, to fil up the House with either Malignants or neuters, whose elections for such places were industriously labored by them, and for that purpose, Writs were especially procured and speeded out for Elections to all such vacant places where they could hope to prevail for such men to be chosen, and particularly for the many poor Boroughs in Cornwal, Wales, and other places, whose former Burgesses in the time of War had most of them gone off to the *KING*, and (where the Countreys having been so wholly and highly engaged for him, but newly reduced from under his power) such persons were likeliest to be chosen as would serv his and their turn, at least for the corrupt peace designed with him, and likewise for such vacant Boroughs elswhere as were either infected with malignancy, or by their poverty and dependance on the great men of the Kings party were likeliest to be wrought on for the same purpose.

Thus was there a flood of such new Burgesses brought in upon you, as had been some of them engaged against you, and by your own Qualifications incapable of that trust: (yet by the arts and prevalence of the aforesaid party) admitted and kept in the House, and most of them at best, disaffected to the cause you first ingaged in, and where divers such have come upon undue or disputable Elections, yet by the same Arts and prevalence they have been got first into the House, and so kept in, while the Elections have been disputed at the Committee for Priviledges, where by the practices and prevalence, the Elections of many honest men have been long suspended under examination, and kept off from tryall; and when cleared there in behalf of such, yet the reports thereof from that Committee have been industriously evaded and held off from the House.

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By these Arts, those self-serving Men united with the old Royalists and new Malignant and Neuters brought into the House, had gained ordinarily, a prevailing party in your Councels and Committees, and assisted oft with others (formerly faithful in the common Cause; but either corrupted by the insinuations of the King and his Party, or from jealousies or otherwise, as is before expressed, byassed from the common Cause:) They powerfully carried on their Designes to serve themselves, and make their own advantages in a corrupt closure with the King, and by subtile endevors made way for the bringing of him in on terms, destructive to the publike; we have formerly set forth much of the series of their Designes, and corrupt Councels in this kinde: We again set before you some few particulars thereof; as,

1. Their betraying *Ireland* into the enemies hands, by recalling the Lord *Lisle* from his command there, and putting the power of the best part of that Kingdom, and where the Parliament had the strongest footing (*Munster*) into the hands of *Inchiquine*, a native Irishman, one who had formerly served the King there; and who hath since revolted from the Parliament, hath lately united with the Irish Rebels, and (with them and *Ormond*) is again ingaged for the King.

2. Their endeavoring to bring in the King upon his own terms, without satisfaction or security to the Kingdom, *viz.* Upon his Message of the twelfth of *May*, 1647. And to this end (with so manifest injustice and indignity) to disband the Army, before any peace made or assured.

3. They endevored protection of the Eleven impeached Members from Justice, and endevoring with them to raise a new War, by gratifying, listing, and ingaging against the Army, many Reformadoes, and other Officers and Souldiers, in and about *London*, in *June* and *July*, 1647. and therein profusely mispending and imbezzelling the 200000 *l* or the greatest part thereof, which was borrowed by the Parliament upon great securities, and designed chiefly for *Ireland*.

4. Their countenancing, abetting, and partaking with that tumultuous violence of the Apprentices and others, against both Houses of Parliament, when both the Speakers and many faithful Members were driven away in *August* 1647. which was acted clearly in prosecution of that Trensonable engagement, for bringing of the King in upon his own terms, in his Message of the twelfth of *May* preceding: Their setting up a new Speaker under that force in the absence of the other, and the Members with him, and passing divers Ordinances, and giving large powers for the raising of a new War (by arming Malignants, and those Apprentices and others that appeared in the said tumultuous violence) visibly and professedly in maintenance and prosecution of that treasonable engagement.

5. Their correspondencies, engagements, and assistances to and with the tumultuous Petitioners last Spring, for a Personal Treaty, and with the rebellious Insurrections in *Kent*, *Essex* &c. the revolted ships and Prince of *Wales* in them, and with the *Scots* Army by their invitations or correspondencies, encouraged to invade this Kingdom; by which means the Kingdom was last Summer engaged in a new and bloody War, to the utter hazard of losing the Cause you had engaged for, and of a total Conquest over the Kingdom.

6. That when the Army was dispersed and engaged in several parts of the Kingdom, in opposing the enemies, and suppressing the troubles these men had raised: And when many faithful Members of Parliament were employed abroad upon necessary publike services, and others through Malignant tumults about the City, could not with safety attend the House; Then that corrupt and Apostatising Party, taking advantage of these Distractions and Diversions which themselves had caused; First, recalled in those Members whom the House had formerly impeached, and voted guilty of treason, or high crimes; and for the same (in regard they were fled) to be expelled the House, and made incapable

ny more of that trust; some of whom had so far engaged to the Prince in his undertakings, as that they had Commissions from him, and severall Counties appertained to them to be under their severall commands, in order to a conjunction of Forces with and for him when he should appear in Action. Then they recalled the Votes you had passed for no more Addresses, and for securing the Kings person, and setling the kingdom without him, voted a personal Treaty with him, thereby (besides other evils to the prejudice of the publique interest of the kingdom) betraying to his, and his parties Revenge, both the Army and those well-affected people who (upon your aforesaid votes against him) had with your grateful acceptance, declared their Resolutions to live and die with you therein, they voted also to treat with him upon such propositions as himself should make, and exempted from justice their corresponding Leaders in the last Summers Warres and Insurrections, by an hypocriticall voting of many of them onely to be banished, and the rest onely to Fines, or small Compositions: and resolved that the king should be restored with freedom, safety, and honour, and an enlargement of his Revenue.

When thus necessitated (to avoid the immediate effect of these distructive councells and proceedings, and no other help appearing) we interposed to remonstrate against the evill and danger of these wayes, finding a majority for the most part pack'd and form'd (as is before exprest) and partly corrupted by time, factions, divitions, and the insinuating Arts of the king and his party. Thereupon with the deprecation of the present imminent mischiefs appearing in the Treaty, we porpounded the two ordinary Remedies against such prevailing evils in a supreame Councel, viz. That a period might be set for the ending of this Parliament, in order to the successive elections of new and equal Representatives (which for the main, is the remedy originally due to the people, and the very foundation of their liberty) and that for the mean time in matters of such high concernment to the publique, as the then transactions were, there might be a liberty for such Members, as in behalf of the Common-wealth did dissent from the Majority, to enter their dissents or protests, so as the kingdom might have an orderly way to distinguish betwixt such as deserted or betrayed the publique Trust, and those that kept faithfully to it, which is the ordinary remedy in such cases, in most publique Councels through the world, constantly allowed in the House of Peers, and of late most happily used in the Parliament of Scotland, with glorious witness from God, and an unvaluable blessing thereby to both Kingdoms. But what ever we propounded, or could say, we could obtain no answer or consideration at all. The things we tendered against the evils of the Treaty in hand, and against the corrupt unsafe peace thereby designed, were put off from time to time as the Treaty was prolonged, not to be considered till the Treaty should be ended, and the peace concluded, as endeavoured, (that is) till they should be past considering. For that remedy by a period to this Parliament, and succession of new, as we and other people upon our severall addresses for it before had been rejected, and discountenanced therein, so was it now too apparent, That the said corrupt Majority having designed the establishment of a lasting Dominion shared betwixt the king and themselves in a perpetuall Parliament, would not lend an ear, not admit a thought towards the laying down their own power, or rendring it back to the people from whom they received it; neither would the other Remedy by Protests be born by them, who in their Councels of Darkness found it more for their safety and advantage to walk invisible and coverd under that priviledged name of Parliament then by admitting Protests, to be exposed naked under their own.

In this case we advanced higher to attend Providence, for the opening of some way to avoid the present evils designed, and introduce the desired good unto the Kingdom; where we said or acted nothing in relation to the Parliament, or any Member of it, still by the Vote past (upon the long nights debate *Decem.* 5.) we found that corrupt majority so resolvedly bent to compass their designe of bringing in the King, as that though

he had finally denyed such things, from some of which by their Covenant (whereto they had pretended so much zeal) and from others by the publick Faith given, they were obliged not to recede. And though the ending of this Parliament, and setling the Kingdom upon the foundation of successive Parliaments (which we are sure, were things most essential to a settlement) had not at all been considered or mentioned in the Treaty: yet upon what the King had granted, They did by that Vote lay the foundation for a closure with him on his own terms, or at least for uniting the interest of him and his party with their own in order to another War, in that behalf, against your selves, and all that should oppose their designe. And besides the visible tendencie of that Vote thereunto, we wanted not good intelligence, That (had they been suffered to meet all in the House but once more) it was designed to have past some higher Resolutions, to lay further foundations for such a new quarrel, so as to carry therein the name and Countenance of Parliamentary Authority together with the Kings, and the acceptable pretence of Peace, to draw men in, and then to have adjourned the Parliament for a long time, to the exclusion of all Remedy in the Case, but by another War.

4. Thus finding a necessity of some present course to prevent such a mischief; and the onely ordinary, or orderly wayes of Remedy being denyed and shut up against us, as is before expresst, wee were prest on by that necessity, to a sudden and extraordinary way; and by reason of their denying you that liberty of acquitting your selves by Protest, or by entering your Dissents (whereby any ground of discrimination might be laid in a voluntary Act within the House) having no other means or ground to make such a discrimination, but by a conjectural judgement amongst our selves, according to the best information we could gain, we were enforced to proceed as we did. First, to seize and secure such as by your own former Impeachments, and by credible informations of their later criminal practices appeared obnoxious to Justice, together with some others, who by like information had appeared most active and united in those Counsels with them: And secondly, to keep out of the House such others, who in their discourses and carriages abroad had discovered themselves to favour the same designes.

Having thus set before you the necessity for what we did upon these grounds premised:

1. We appeal to the knowledge and consciences of all true and faithfull Patriots in the House, who may best understand the complexion and temper thereof, whether they have been able to satisfie themselves with the Counsels of the majority ordinarily, since it has been so formed and packt, or corrupted, as aforesaid? and since the Royall practices began to be set on foot amongst them? or whether since then they could tell how by the best use of Authority or Reason to amend or repair the Constitution of the House, or reduce it to a true English complexion by any alteration or purgation arising from within themselves? And (if not so) whether some remedy from without were not necessary?

2. We appeal to all unbyas'd and considering men, whether while that corrupted Party, being Masters of the major Vote, did, by their denyall of any liberty to enter Dissents therefrom, hold all the Counsels and Judgements of the rest involved in the dark with their own, under the name of Parliament-Resolves, there were any means left us for a regular and judiciall discrimination, or other way then to make the best distinction wee could in our own judgements, upon the best informations. And (if so) whether in assuming that, and proceeding thereupon as we did, we be not both justifiable by the necessity thereof; and (in want of the due ground for a more unerring distinction) excusable in mistaking (perhaps) as to some particulars. And though in these Counsels that have lately prevailed in the House, there had been nothing of Malignant Designe, intentionally to the hurt of the Publick, for which any of them could be clearly judged to have betrayed or forfeited their Trust: yet upon the single consideration of the dividednesse of mens

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Counsels, Principles and Ways in the House, and of the incertainty and unsetledness of Resolutions, and Proceedings thereby occasioned (which has so long been visible amongst you) we appeal to the several late yeers experiences of the whole Kingdom, whether without some extraordinary course to weed out those roots of Faction and division which so many yeers sitting had bred, increas'd, and fasten'd amongst you, and to render your resolutions more fix'd, united, and free from the interruptions or intanglements of such different and distracted Counsels, there were any hopes of good to be produc'd for the Kingdom, or of any comfortable Settlement, in such time as the condition of the Kingdom would bear the delay?

And now to conclude, in answer to what you have demanded an Account of.

First, for those Members who are yet detained in custody, they are either such who have been formerly impeached, and (in part) judged by the House for treason, or other high crimes, and never acquitted, and against whom we can, and very shortly shall produce new matter of no lesse crime: or else such who have appeared most active and united in Counsels with them, against whom also we are preparing, and shall shortly give matters of particular Impeachment.

Secondly, For those others who have been withheld by the Guard from coming into the House, as nothing but such necessity, as aforesaid, and the cleer denyal of any ground of distinction by voluntary discrimination admitted amongst your selves, should have made us in such manner to exercise our own judgment and power in the case; so you having since by your Resolutions of the 12 and 13 of *Decemb.* last declared many of those Votes (wherein chiefly the publick Interest hath been of late deserted) to be dishonourable and destructive; and having admitted the entring of Dissents against the Vote of *Decemb.* the 5 last, wherein the will of all the rest seems comprehended and closed up (as far as God would suffer it to proceed) and many faithfull Members having thereupon publickly declared, and entered their dissents from the same; by which means there are now cleerer grounds of discrimination begun amongst your selves, and a competent number of Members of whom by their dissents registred, we can publickly take notice, as of men standing entire to the publick Trust, and in whose judgements we may repose: We shall therefore henceforth forbear to proceed any further in the exclusion of any upon our own judgement or information gain'd from without, and shall refer to the knowledge and judgement of those whose dissents from that Vote already are, or hereafter shall be entred, both to consider what other Members have stood cleer from the series of those corrupt Counsels you have so declared against, and who have been notoriously guilty thereof; and accordingly to determine which shall be readmitted, as having kept to their trust; and which excluded, as having deserted the same. But we most earnestly desire, as you tender the good and quiet of the Kingdom, with the easing of the burthens, and ending the troubles thereof, and would for the time this Parliament shall continue, prevent inirrecoverable relapse of all things into their former miserable condition, and avoid the numerous evils and endlesse troubles which the renewed prevailing of the same corrupt Counsels, or but of like divisions and unsetledness in your Counsels, would evidently produce; that therefore you would resolve to exclude henceforth from the House, and make the strictest caution and provision to keep out all such who are known to have carried on, or to be guilty of that series of corrupt Votes which you have so justly branded, as aforesaid; and that none may be readmitted amongst you, who shall not either by their own Proceits, or upon your certain knowledge be particularly acquitted therefrom.

Jan. 3. 1648. *Signed in the name, and by the Appointment of the Generall Councell of the Officers of the Army,*

John Rushworth *Secr.*